2: O'Shea G-8 (1944-1945) 1947 MK4 Trucial Oman MK4

so as to form a nest. Some pearl dealers keep as many as forty-five sets, graduated according to their perforations. The weighing of pearls is a most complicated matter, but very simply a pearl is rated in *chaus*, a Bombay measure, which is one three hundred and thirtieth part of a *maskal*, which is made up in turn by 100 *dokras*. A *chau* is really a unit of value as well as a weight, and changes according to the number of pearls being valued together. Thus, two pearls, weighing exactly half a third of a pearl, would not be estimated so highly in *chaus* as the single pearl. The finest pearl I saw in Jam Shan's collection was valued at £8,000, or nearly £73 a *chau*.

If the valuation of pearls is a complicated affair the financial organization of the industry is even more so. The industry teems with merchants, brokers, middlemen, agents, and moneylenders. First the pearl fleet has to be financed before it can go to sea, and money has to be provided for the crews and divers. This is advanced partly by the owners of the boats and partly by a special class of moneylenders called *Musaqqams*, who demand ten or twenty-five per cent interest. Every boat is commanded by a captain, or *Nakhuda*, who receives a percentage of the catch; sometimes he is the owner of the boat. Next in importance to him is the *Ghasah*, or diver, followed by the *Siyub*, or hauler, the *Radhif*, or extra hand, and the *Walaid*, or apprentice, whose duty it is to catch fish, cook, look after the pipes and coffee, and attend to other minor duties.

The *ghasah*, whose only work is to dive, are mostly poor Arabs and free negroes or slaves, and their efficiency depends more on their skill and daring than on the strength of their constitution. A slave diver who is not afraid to enter deep and muddy water containing weeds is ordinarily valued at considerably over a thousand rupees. The *siyub*, whose duties are merely to manage the boat and to lower and pull up the divers, are usually landsmen whom age or other causes have obliged to abandon diving. The total crew of a pearl boat varies from ten to forty men, the average number being sixteen. All sorts of boats are used for pearling, even jollyboats being fitted out for the purpose, but the majority are sambuks, batils, bagarahs and shuais. A large boat, holding forty men, will cost 30,000 rupees or more to construct and fit out.

There are two principal seasons for pearl diving: the *Ghaus-al-Bard*, or cold-diving season, which lasts from April to May, and the *Ghaus-al-Kabir*, or 'great diving', beginning in June after the end